

A Time to Heal: Hope Present in Maui Despite Apocalyptic Devastation

Nearly a week after the devastating Maui fires the relief effort is in full swing. Churches and numerous humanitarian aid groups, including CBN's Operation Blessing, are doing all they can to help the people of Maui find hope and new life after tragedy.

One sign of hope, the Maria Lanakila Catholic Church in Lahaina, built in 1846, appears to have survived untouched by the flames, even though burned houses are all around it.

And hope is also what the staff of Harvest Kumulani Church near Lahaina, is trying to give people.

"And the hope is Jesus, and our desire is to spread the love of Jesus," said Pastor Gabe Velasquez of Harvest Church. "I saw it on Sunday. We had an incredible service. We had over 600 people show up and that's without telling anybody and there's no cell service around here right now. You know, our God is the God of hope and He's a healer. And this place needs that more than anything."

And those who've lost everything need basic necessities. That's why Harvest Kumulani is teaming up with relief organizations, including Samaritan's Purse, to bring aid to the victims.

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CBN's Operation Blessing is also in Maui working with Youth With a Mission to send needed relief items like generators,

gas grills, tents, tarps and clothes to those in need.

Just last month, Harvest Kumulani's Sr. Pastor Greg Laurie and I walked down the streets of Lahaina that were busy with tourists and shoppers and stood under the famous banyan tree, a gift to the island in 1873 by Missionaries from India. Even though the flames consumed many of the historic landmarks, the tree, which covers almost two acres, appears to have survived. Pastor Laurie says, it's another sign of hope.

"I think when we're rooted in Christ, we can survive anything. And that's really a picture of the people, especially the Christians on Maui. You know, their faith is strong, but many of them have lost literally everything. They have lost their homes, they have lost their livelihood and even more tragically, so many have lost their lives," he said. {eoa}

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